



# ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
New Orleans Field Division

Contact:  
ATF Senior Special Agent/PIO Austin R. Banks  
(504) 329-1443

For Immediate Release  
May 16, 2007

**ATF/SECRET SERVICE ARREST 3, SEIZE INVENTORY OF  
GUN DEALER 'FUELING VIOLENT CRIME IN NEW ORLEANS'**  
*Charges Include Falsifying Records and Aggravated Identity Theft*

NEW ORLEANS – Special Agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the U.S. Secret Service, assisted by Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office deputies, today arrested the owner and two employees of a Jefferson Parish gun dealer and seized the business' inventory on charges of falsifying firearms records and aggravated identify theft.

Herman Eicke, 65, of Kenner, La., the owner of Elliot's Gun Shop, and employees Timothy Harris, 54, and Rebecca Zitzmann, 42, both of Jefferson, La., were arrested without incident. Zitzmann was charged with falsifying federal firearms records and Eicke and Harris with aggravated identity theft.

Executing federal search and seizure warrants at Elliot's, ATF agents also seized hundreds of firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunition and records pertaining to the business. The search will continue until all firearms, ammunition and records are seized.

According to the affidavit, the ATF investigation revealed that firearms purchased at Elliot's were used in violent crimes or found in the possession of convicted felons. A review of the firearms involved in such crimes showed the store had an extremely short "time to crime" -- the time from the sale of the firearm to the recovery of the firearm during a crime.

During the period March 1, 2002, to March 1, 2007, more than 2,300 firearms purchased at Elliot's Gun Shop and its predecessor, Elliot's Small Arms, were recovered by various law enforcement agencies in relation to crimes. Of more than 2,300 guns recovered, more than 125 were related to murder investigations and more than 500 were related to crimes involving illegal drugs. The majority of these guns were recovered in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

"Those arrested today were fueling the violent crime problem in the New Orleans area," said David Harper, Special Agent in Charge of ATF's New Orleans Field Division. "They have shown a reckless disregard for the federal laws and responsibilities associated with the privilege of possessing a federal firearms license. I am confident that we have eliminated a significant supplier of guns to the criminal element."

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“ATF and Secret Service enjoy a strong working relationship honed during decades of joint projects, to include protective and investigative matters,” said Kim Tate, Special Agent in Charge of the Secret Service’s New Orleans office. “The result of our most recent collaboration is demonstrated by the actions taken today. I expect to see a major impact on crime and safety issues in the metropolitan area.”

According to one of the criminal complaints, a confidential informant and an undercover ATF agent posing as a “straw buyer” were able to purchase a firearm from Elliot’s with Zitzmann’s assistance. Zitzmann illegally sold a handgun to the informant, but allowed the undercover ATF agent to complete the ATF paperwork to make it appear that the agent purchased the gun.

In February 2005, ATF revoked a federal firearms license held by Harris, who was operating the store as Elliot’s Small Arms. Prior to losing his license, ATF cited Harris on numerous occasions for failing to comply with federal firearms regulations regarding the sale of guns. Immediately after having his license revoked, Eicke, who had been an employee of Harris’ at Elliot’s Small Arms, obtained a federal firearms license under the trade name of Elliot’s Gun Shop. An ATF undercover investigation revealed that Harris was still running the business even though Eicke held the license.

ATF uncovered an Eicke-Harris scheme that included forging law enforcement officers’ signatures and using a photocopy of their law enforcement credentials to purchase handguns from a distributor in New York at discounted prices. The entire scheme was devised solely to increase their profits. Upon confirming that Eicke and Harris were “stealing” the identities of law enforcement officers, ATF invited the Secret Service into the investigation due to its expertise in identity theft and financial crimes investigations. The Secret Service has jurisdiction for crimes of aggravated identity theft.

Simultaneous to the arrests and the search at Elliot’s, ATF and Secret Service agents obtained documents from the wholesaler in New York as evidence of the identity theft scheme. All of the search and arrest warrants are the result of a yearlong investigation that is continuing.

Additional ATF special agents and assistant U.S. attorneys have been detailed to New Orleans since the one year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina last August. The additional agents and federal prosecutors have been utilized to help combat violent crime in New Orleans as well as assist on major cases, including this investigation.

ATF, aware that personally owned firearms may be in the store, will make every effort to return those guns to the rightful owners. Anyone who had a gun stored at Elliot’s may call ATF at (504) 581-GUNS. Furthermore, any member of the public with information relating to criminal activity at Elliot’s should contact ATF at the same number.

More information on ATF and its programs to reduce violent crime is at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).

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